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The Long Island FISHERMAN

The Difference Between Just Fishing and Catching Fish!

MARCH 4th, 1976, ISSUE No. 7

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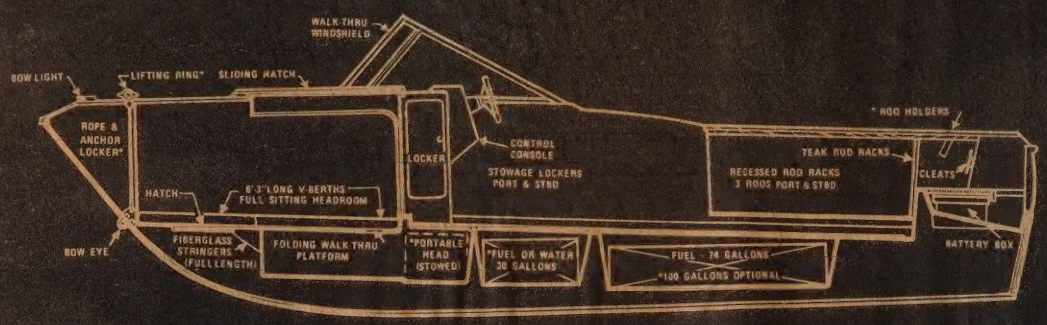

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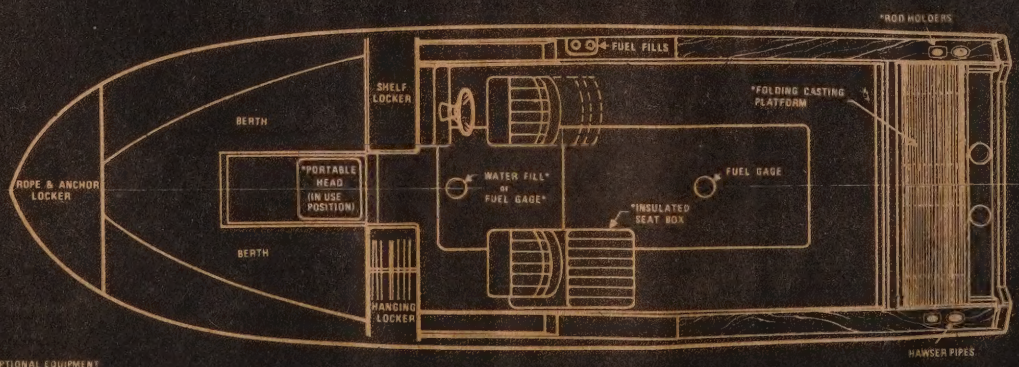

The Long Island FISHERMAN

THE ONLY WEEKLY GUIDE FOR FISHERMEN IN THE N.Y. AREA

VOLUME 11, No. 7 MARCH 4th, 1976

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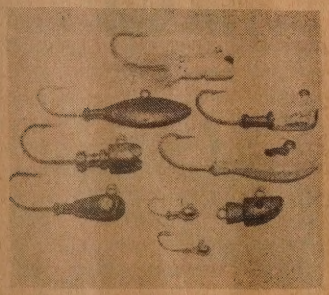

ABOUT THE COVER: An assortment of lead heads used to make bucktails and feather lures by Dick Mermon in his two-part "How-To" article beginning on page 13.

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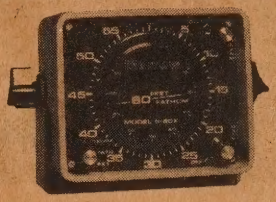

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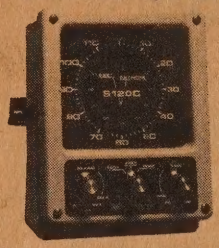

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ANNUAL SEAL CENSUS

The Annual Seal Census (1976) has been started by the Graduate School of Oceanography of the University of Rhode Island. It covers New Hampshire to Long Island. Seal sightings information is being requested for a study underway by the university. Forms on which the necessary information should be listed are available from the Marine Environmental Council of Long Island, P.O. Box 55, Seaford, NY 11783.

MECLI MEETING

A meeting of the Marine Environmental Council of Long Island will be held on Thursday March 4th, 1976 at 8:00 P.M. at the Bowery Savings Bank, 5100 Sunrise Highway, Massapequa park. Use rear entrance and take elevator to Apollo Meeting Room. Mecli meetings are open to the public and volunteers to work in the cause of protecting our marine waters are welcome. Contact George Wilde at (516) SU5-3139.

8 LESSON BOATING SAFETY & SEAMANSHIP COURSE

A free course in Safe Boating will be conducted by the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary at Brooklyn College, Boylan Hall, Room 3129 by the Sheepshead Bay Flotilla beginning March 5, 1976 at 8 P.M. Students may register March 5 and March 12.

The lectures will continue on Fiday nights for 9 weeks at which time an exam will be given and certificates awarded to the students who achieve passing grades.

Subjects to be covered includ Piloting, Charts, Compass, knots and Splices, Rules of the Road, Safety, and Seamanship. For more information contact Flotilla 11-6. H. Glaser 344-4777 between 9 and 4.

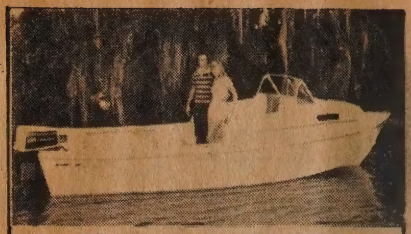
Attention Subscribers!

We are pleased to announce that the Cordell Lure Company has resumed shipment of lures as advertised in last season's subscription premium.

The shipping delay was caused when two lures, one of a hard and the other a soft plastic, melted into each other during shipment. In order to resolve this problem, The Fisherman has agreed to change the selection of lures offered.

Cordell has already begun to ship two (2) Mean-O-Eels to each subscriber entitled to the lures, and Cordell expects to complete the mailing as soon as possible.

We are grateful for the patience and understanding of everyone involved.



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Sinker Bouncing

Late Winter Cod

with Matt Ahern

"I told you we should have gone flounder fishing," I said to Artie Leidecker, my long-time fishing buddy. "At least we'd be getting action."

It was late March and we were aboard Artie's "Echo", anchored over one of the "high-spots" on the Cholera Banks, looking for late winter cod. All we had succeeded in doing thus far was to feed bergalls our choice skimmer.

"Give 'em time, and stop your grumbling," Artie replied. Still mumbling to myself, I rebaited the 5/0 Sproat and allowed the eight ounce bank sinker to carry the rig to the bottom, where it immediately fell victim to larcenous bergalls.

We'd been anchored over an hour with no luck, not a ling or blackfish did we have. Not even a horned dogfish. The area was barren, except for the bergalls. I figured it was time for a move home.

The only good thing about the day was its lack of bone-chilling wind. With a bright sun straining to supply a little warmth, we were comfortable enough. It would have been a beautiful day for flounder fishing in Reynold's Channel.

Time dragged on and if there's anything more boring to a dedicated codfisherman than feeding bergalls for two hours, I don't know what it is. Discouraged, I reeled in and began washing the bait board, hoping Atie would take the hint.

Minutes passed by as I continued with my chore. Then Artie turned and got my attention.

"They stopped," he said.

"They never started," I replied, applying the scrub brush with renewed vigor.

"No...no...the bergalls. They stopped."

"You think we filled them up? Maybe they ate your hooks."

"C'mon and fish, wise guy. You know what I mean. There's cod down there."

"Or dogfish."

But it was cod, as Artie sooned proved by hooking into one about 8 pounds.

"Well, I'll be damned," I said, as I gaffed and lifted the fish aboard.

Now my hopes soared. I knew that with one cod on deck there's always a good chance of more. The trick is to get that first one.

A minute later my sinker thumped bottom.

Just as Artie said, the bergalls were gone, and it wasn't too long before I felt the tell-tale knock of a cod. On the third yank, I came up hard and set the hook into my first cod of the day. This one a mate to Artie's.

We finished the day with nine cod, two of which came up as double-headers on Artie's rig. The largest cod wasn't big, maybe twelve pounds, but they were nice fish for late March. We had none under four.

I've noticed over the years that by late March most cod will have already departed for their summer feeding grounds on Nantucket Shoal, but for the fisherman willing to give it a try, there's always some late starters around. Weather permitting, I seldom fail to connect at this time of year.

We usually fish these late cod in the deeper water of the Cholera Banks and also southeast of there to the 100 foot line. We've also had past success at Seventeen Fathom Bank and the old Ambrose Lightship Ridge. Offshore Sea Bright also pays off.

I wouldn't look for them in water less than sixty-five feet, though. Nor would I look for them on close-to-shore sand and gravel bottom as one might in early November.

Occasionally, wrecks pay off...as many surprised blackfishermen discover. But as a rule, it's best to check out rocky bottom and ledges first.

Cod may be clustered in one area and you may be lucky to hit them immediately, but if not you should think about drifting around your selected area until fish are located.

But, you say, you fellows weren't drifting. True enough. But unless you, or someone you know, has the fifty years Cholera Banks experience of Artie Leidecker's, you'd better think about drifting if the fish don't show up in a reasonable time.

Depending on bottom, bergalls can be murder. While seldom thick as that day on Cholera, they can surely put a kink in your fishing. Remember, though, the reason bergalls are numerous where you might be fishing is because they find the food supply excellent. And if they do, so will the cod.

Should you use chum when anchored? It depends. There isn't much point in using it around wrecks, although it's done to some extent. I'd save the chum for open-bottom areas. But remember to chum sparingly. What you don't want to do is draw such unwanted fish as dogfish, conger eels, and...ugh—bergalls.

The best method to use when chumming for codfish is to bat whole skimmers overboard. It may take a little practice to hit everyone dead center, but after awhile you'll get it. It's also best to bat them close to your line. This is a much better way than crushing several dozen skimmers in a metal container and scattering the bits and pieces overboard where they often drift too far off before hitting bottom.

From past experience, I've found these late winter cod to be line shy. Therefore, you'll find it pays to use as little hardware as possible. Large size hooks, say 8/0 or 9/0 should be left home. This is the time of year to use your 5/0 Sproats on eighteen-inch leaders. Any regular-shanked hook of this size will do, of course, but I like the Sproat pattern best. It's sharp point will easily penetrate the cod's leathery jaw.

Incidentally, it isn't necessary to use two hooks, unless you want a ling or two, or a possible blackfish. March cod tend to swim high and few are caught on hooks hugging bottom. Tie this high hook to your line by making a two-inch double-overhand knotted dropper loop about three feet above the sinker. Fresh skimmer will produce most fish.

I wouldn't jig when anchored. It isn't the best idea to move the bait around too much if you can help it. Occasionally, you'll discover a cod has snuggled up to your bait, giving no sign of its presence. So, it's a good idea to check from time to time. These fish are usually deeply hooked and there's little chance of losing them.

As a rule, these late winter cod attack bait with a vengeance and you should be prepared to strike solidly—but only after you have had two or three good, solid tugs. Should you miss, leave the rig lie quietly. If there's bait left, the cod will be back. Give the fish at least a full minute to return.

If there is still not action, tighten the line and lift the rig slowly. This often entices a reluctant cod to snap at the bait. If weight is felt, sock it to him—hard! You'll find that these fish lip-hooked and that's the reason for striking firmly. You've got to get that hook planted deeply if you want to bring him up.

So, before April sets in, and you start working on flounders, pick out a nice day and try these late winter cod.

It's a long wait until next November.

Surf Side with Fred Schwab

The Beach Buggy
Part II

Basic equipment for beach travel is a spare tire and wheel, jack, lug wrench, shovel, jack board (8/8" x 25"), flashlight, first aid kit, and for towing, a minimum of twenty feet of sufficiently strong chain, or rope with chain and hook at each end. Other recommended items include a spare fan belt, fire extinguisher, and flares. extinguisher and flares.

Proper handling of a beach buggy is extremely important to achieving maximum performance from the vehicle when on the beach. Quite frequently it is this factor which is the difference between gliding along or plowing through the sand, and for that matter, sometimes just moving. Learning to know where not to drive your vehicle, which is nothing more than the application of a little common sense, is basic to proper handling.

Whether the vehicle is two or four-wheel drive, dropping the tire pressure is essential prior to going on the sand. The only exception might be a beach which you know has a hard surface; a feature not very common to Long Island beaches. Now I'm sure that at this point there's a reader, with a four-wheel drive vehicle, saying, "he's crazy", why I run the beaches on full pressure"! Well maybe you can and if you've been doing it for awhile I'll bet your tires, transmission and probably the engine have the wear to prove it. In all probability you are the guy who fouls up the track and beach approaches by bulling your way along, churning and digging into the sand. (Hey guy; thanks!)

Entrance to, or departure from the beach, should, and in most instances must be confined to "authorized" or commonly used access points. Where there are limited specific approach routes, it should be assumed that some governing authority has designated, recognized, accepted, or tolerates them as such, and continued use of the area could be imperilled if other than these are used. Another consideration is that regularly used routes are usually the easiest to negotiate and if you should happen to get "hung-up", there's a better chance of a helping hand coming along.

Not to be forgotten is the environmental question. Admittedly, the beach buggy does have an impact upon the environment, but in my opinion, not as much as some "occasional" environmentalists would like everyone to believe. All too often the cry of, "limited access and use for preservation purposes", is used as a convenient smoke screen, masking a purely selfish motive. Usually some group, or nearby residents want the area all to themselves. Claims of damage to the environment have great appeal and even if false, the surf angler usually loses out due to lack of organization as well as economic and political clout. However, damage, leading to eventual erosion of a sand dune, is a valid complaint with respect to the beach buggy. Continuous passage over a dune, in addition to disturbing it's crest, destroys needed vegetation and quite possibly will result in the dunes eventual destruction. In doing so, an important barrier of storm driven tides is eliminated, exposing the land beyond to the ravages of the sea. So please, stay off the dunes. Another matter of environmental concern is bird nesting areas. These should be given a wide berth.

Once on the beach it's advisable to stay in the track. It usually provides a comparatively smooth and less troublesome ride and if the beach is strewn with tidal debris it's less likely that you will run over a nail infested board or some other object which could damage the tires or vehicle. If it's a rocky beach, proceed with caution. the vehicles which proceeded yours may have cleared that rock in the middle of the track, you might not be so lucky. Avoid indiscriminate criss-crossing of the track, turn-off only when necessary. Besides being dangerous, excessive speed could result in damage to the vehicle or getting into a bad situation which at a slower pace, you could have avoided. Keep it in mind that you're not on a highway with it's smooth, even surface; look for the unexpected and drive slowly.

When stopping, do not leave your vehicle in the track, park far enough away to allow passers-by sufficient clearance. If they are forced to "jump" the track and get "hung-up" in the process, it will have been your fault. The question of who should yield when two vehicles meet head-on while traveling in the same track is often determined by the existing circumstances. In general, the driver who has the water to his right should turn out of the track, while in peculiar or difficult situations, common sense must be exercised. Of course, a four-wheel drive vehicle should always yield to other types.

On gradually sloping and sand beaches, when the tide is down, a lot of fellows will run below the high water mark. The "usually" firm surface offers a much smoother ride and far less wear and tear on the vehicle. But there are dangers, not all of which are obvious or readily seen. After a storn or unusually high tides there is the possibility of a sudden drop-off due to scouring by waves, currents, or drainage from flooded areas. Other dangers include an unexpected deposit of soft mushy sand, a tidal pool and debris. If you're not sure that these situations do not exist, it is best to play it safe and remain above the high water mark. It's my practice, never to run along the waters edge unless others have gone before me, and even then I try to remain alert, riding in their tracks at a slow speed. A failure to start the engine, for one reason or another, is a problem which most car owners experience; the fellow who parks below the high water mark is tempting fate.

In soft sand try to avoid sharp turns because they increase the chances of becoming bogged down, especially if your vehicle is not equipped with four-wheel drive. A common mistake made by freshman buggy operators, and impatient veterans, when they realize that they are stuck, is too much acceleration and a failure to straighten out the wheels. You can often save yourself some grief and a lot of hard work, by straightening out those wheels, shifting into reverse and slowly backing out. An added bit of strategy is a further reduction in tire pressure, if the situation warrants it. As a courtesy to others, if you are forced to dig your way out, fill in the holes, otherwise someone else will come along and get into worse trouble than you had.

While courtesy is important regardless of where you might happen to be, it has particular significance along the beach. Developing the habit of being courteous and thoughtful of others will make your stay on the beach, and that of course around you, more pleasant. In many situations, courtesy and safety are one in the same. Lack of it could lead to serious consequences such as, your expulsion from the beach or it's closure to all, and/or, property damage, injury or loss of life.

Always respect the rights of others.

Any group or individual, picknicking, bathing or merely walking along the beach, should be given a wide berth and passed-by in low gear at a slow pace. Keep it in mind that children, pre-occupied with playing or off in their private world of fantasy and dreams, may not see you. Remember that most people, when on the beach, are not on the lookout for, or expect to see a vehicle, and it's often difficult to hear one approaching. Don't be impatient with a non-fishermen who is in the track. Many people are not knowledgeable with respect to beach vehicles and the problems encountered when driving on the sand, and are therefore not aware of the tracks importance. Anglers without buggies must also be shown consideration. Don't crowd them off the track or out of their chosen fishing spot. Keep an eye peeled for any equipment such as pails, tackle bags, or other items which may have been placed on the beaches, especially if you are riding close to the waters edge.

Offering aid to any person in time of need or trouble along the beach, is a responsibility which all anglers should assume. In general, beach operators whom I have known, will go out of their way to assist someone who is experiencing difficulty, and this is as it should be. Of course, if the fellow refuses your help or is unwilling to accept your advice, that is another matter. Many of the beaches frequented by buggy operators are sparsely used. This is especially true during the spring and fall seasons. A good many boating accidents and related mishaps, with lives at stake, would have gone unnoticed but for an alert buggy operator who cared, and notified the proper authorities. Such incidents are well documented.

There is absolutely no excuse for littering the beach and surrounding areas. All trash including bait containers, unwanted fishing line, wrappers, cans and so on, must be disposed of in trash barrels. If none are available, take it with you. Latrine trenches or disposal of sewage waste in any manner, along the the beach is out. If your vehicle is not equipped with a self contained chemical toilet, or some sort of sewage holding device, or if public toilets are not close by, then you have no business being on the beach. Do not camp on the beach or the dunes. That is, pitch a tent or spread equipment about in a manner that could lead someone to think that you are camping. It is specifically forbidden on every beach that I know of, and has frequently been one of, if not the prime factor, which brought about a ban on buggies, or strict supervision where there had been little or none before. There are areas along the coast, under Federal, State, and private control, which permit camping in specified areas immediately adjacent to the beach. Confine your "beach" camping to these.

Photo by Dr. William A. Muller

A beach vehicles most persistent enemy is corrosion. On the beach, it's major causes, salt and dampness are ever present and will make short work of unprotected or neglected metal surfaces. It's a good idea to hose down the vehicle, after a day on the beach, this includes underneath. The drain holes at the base of the doors and rocker arms should occasionally be checked to see that they are not clogged. Drilling additional holes along the side of the rocker arms, underneath the vehicle, will improve air circulation and may be used to spray an oil based rust retardant into this problem area. Sand and water from wetsuits and waders, as well as moisture build-up underneath the padding, will rust out the vehicles floor. Rustoleum paint will prevent this. After proper preparation, apply two coats of #960 Zinc Chromate Primer, or if badly rusted, use #769 Damp-Proof Primer. Complete with two or more finish coats. After each coat be sure to allow sufficient drying time. Before the next application it doesn't hurt to add one or two coats every other year thereafter.

A bit of repetition in closing; do not drive recklessly; respect the rights of others; be courteous; offer a helping hand when it's needed and do not pollute or cause any damage to the environment. If all buggy operators followed these simple rules, there would be far less beaches off-limits, to the motorized beach angler.

Refining Basic Surf Skills

Part II

by Fred Schwab

In general, Part I discussed the subject matter under daylight conditions when in comparison to the dark of night, the angler enjoys unlimited observation. Obviously during night time hours the opportunity to observe surface feeding fish is all but lost, unless there is a very bright moon and the fish are extremely close to your position, or you are fishing in relatively quiet water and can hear the telltale slaps and surface breaks. Limitations are similarly placed upon the anglers ability to observe the activities of other fishermen, the presence and identity of bait and the existing water conditions. Clearly, the experienced angler thoroughly familiar with the area to be fished, has a big edge and if anyone is going to score, it will more than likely be he.

Likewise, the experienced angler, that is, one with hard and dedicated fishing years under his belt, can "sometimes" go into new territory in the dark of night and aided by keen observation and fishing know how, score big. On the other hand, a less seasoned angler must in all honesty attribute any success, under such circumstances, to pure luck, which doesn't happen very often (except it seems, at Jones Beach in the fall, using live eels or bunker.)

It's good advice for one and all, to survey the area to be fished during daylight hours, especially when it's strange territory. Look for rock formations, rips, drop-offs, bars and irregularities in the shoreline, and preferrably do this towards the bottom of an outgoing tide. If you spot any bait make a mental note of where and seemingly what type.

If the location you have selected is in a popular fishing area, it may be helpful to keep an eye peeled for such things as fish carcasses, buggy tracks, unusual amounts of discarded fishing materials such as line, bait and lure containers and other indications of heavy use by the angling fraternity. If it's a rocky area, time permits and you want to play "detective", make a comparison check, in what appear to be potentially productive locations, of marine growth and the presence of slime upon the tops of rocks situated below the normal high water mark. Those with relatively flat surfaces and comparatively little or no growth "may" be popular casting platforms. None of these factors are conclusive proof that a particular location is a "hot spot", but they should be investigated should the local "regulars" be seen heading towards their respective locations after dark.

Inquiry at a local tackle shop is a logical first step prior to fishing a new area, or one which you frequent only on an occasional basis. Of course, conversation with area regulars can be rewarding and while the present "hot spot" may not be revealed to you the information obtained may save you hours of wasted effort at a location which has been, or normally is, unproductive.

When going into new territory bear in mind that what might be a hot lure in your home waters may be a poor producer in another area, but don't lose sight of the fact that anglers often tend to be creatures of habit. Your favorites may not be regarded as very productive in a particular area simply because they are not used enough. On a regional basis there seem to be preferences for specific lures and/or methods of presentation, and on "occasion" a good percentage of the local talent will become programed. Find out what the favorites are, use them, but remain flexible. If they are not producing experiment with your personal preferences.

Observation at night, as already noted, is limited, but whether fishing strange or familiar waters there are certain actions on your part which can result in an evening of success rather than failure. When in close proximity to others be observant. Use not only your sight but hearing as well. Watch the other guys silhouette, look for quick moves, changes in his position and movement patterns, listen for the splash of a struggling fish, click of an anti-reverse or telltale sound of a protesting drag as line is peeled from the spool. Never forget that under the cloak of darkness an experienced angler can quite often successfully conceal that he's taking fish, despite the fact that others are close by.

On one bright moonlit evening several years ago, another angler and your's truly were fishing at one of Montauk's more popular rips within less than 150 feet of a crowd of anglers sitting in and standing around some dozen beach buggies. In what probably amounted to no more than thirty minutes the two of us managed to take 5 bass, ranging from twenty to thirty two pounds. In addition several other good fish were dropped. Only after a rather large and very acrobatic bluefish butted in and proceeded to tail-walk, jump and splash all over the place, did any of the crowd get wise to what we had going for ourselves. Eventually everyone was in the water and most caught fish during the remaining hours of that tidal change, but with few exceptions they were blues. Apparently the bass had moved on or been pushed out by the more aggressive, seemingly more numerous and certainly greedier bluefish.

At the conclusion of the evenings fishing, we surmised from conversation with some of the others, that two factors apparently explained why our earlier success with the bass had gone unnoticed. These were our efforts at concealment and the failure of those on the beach to look for the unexpected.

We were in wet suits and chest deep. When one of us had a fish on, the other would crank his plug in and cease fishing until the fish was under control, but he would continue to hold his fishing rod in an upright position as though he were still working the plug. The individual playing the fish would, with relation to those on the beach, position his rod in a manner which would least reveal the strain of a fish-on. This would be accomplished by placing his back towards the beach and dropping the rod tip to the lowest practical position. When the fish was in close, and during the gaffing and unhooking procedure, the other angler would as best he could, use his body to help conceal the fish from view. Of course, the fact that we were alone in the water helped in many ways. There were no tangles and more importantly there was no necessity to move along with those fish which stripped line while running with the current, thus a fish could be pumped in without any noticeable change in the angler's position.

Despite all the cooperative efforts to conceal our good fortune, the lads on the beach should have spotted what was happening. The gleaming silver white bellies of the bass on our stringers were frequently visible on the waters surface due to the combined forces of current

(Continued on page 27.)

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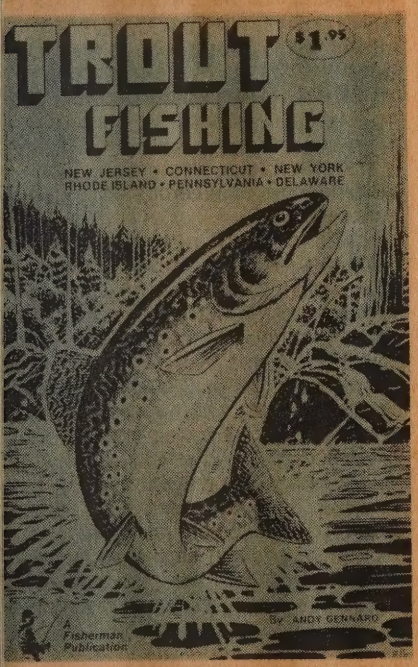

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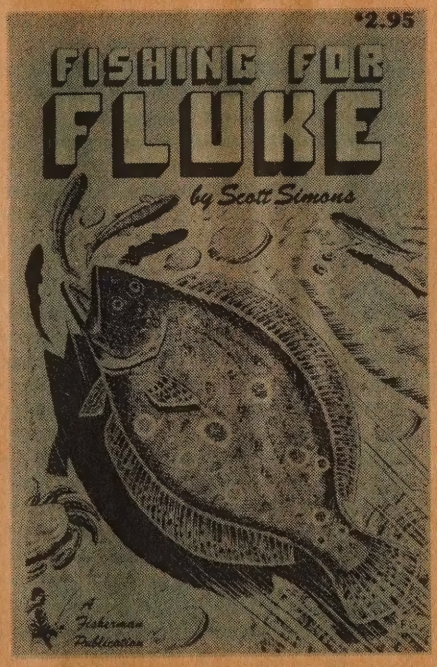

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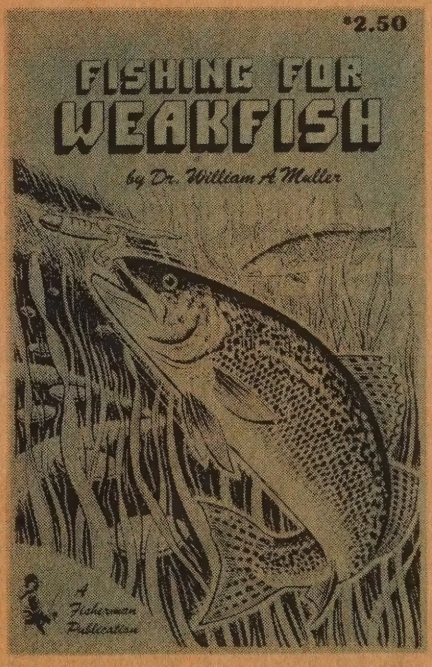

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THE BOTTOM LINE

with Scott Simons

Tying Bottom Rigs

Part I

It won't be long now before the flounder season is in full swing, followed by weakfish, blacks, fluke, etc. But we still have almost a month before decent catches will be the rule in relatively mild weather, and this is the time of the year that most anglers are just itching to do something, ANYTHING, related to fishing to pass the time. So this weekend and next we'll concentrate on tying rigs for the coming season.

Tying the basic bottom rig in advance will save you much time during the season—isn't it better to tie that fluke or blackfish rig in the comfort of your home, rather than on a boat when the fish are biting? Another factor to be considered is the financial savings possible, which can be considerable. Fancy, pre-tied rigs are expensive and invariably have an abundance of swivels, snaps, beads, spinners, and slips that usually do the rigs performance more harm than good.

A bottom rig serves two primary functions: it keeps the baited hook(s) at a depth pre-determined by the angler; it prevents the hook(s), leader and sinker from tangling up; the heavier leader prevents abrasion from bottom obstructions and aids the angler to land a fish.

All bottom rigs consist of three major parts: hook(s), leader and swivel. The only piece of hardware necessary to tie ANY of the basic bottom rigs is a simple barrel swivel, which is used to connect the heavy leader to the lighter main line and prevents the rig from spinning and creating line twist.

Hooks are available at any bait and tackle outlet, but don't try to save any money by purchasing those of suspect quality at bargain prices—spend a few cents more and purchase the proven top-quality name brands. Buying cheap hooks is like a pro-golfer buying used golf balls. You can save a lot of money by purchasing boxes of 100 and snelling them yourself, which has the advantage of allowing you to decide for yourself just how long the snell should be.

Leader material may be purchased at most tackle shops in 10-yard coils or pre-cut lengths of 47 inches. I find the pre-cut lengths easier to work with. The best weight I have found for rigs is 40-lb. test, but 30-lb. is acceptable. Fifty is far too stiff and heavy to present a bait naturally, so steer clear of it if at all possible.

Barrel swivels may be purchased in small quantities at all tackle outlets, but if you use a lot of them in the course of a season, try to purchase them by the gross (144). For a connecting link between my main line and a bottom rig I use a number seven barrel swivel exclusively. The only other size I use is a number five, which acts as a sinker stop on a sliding sinker rig. Whenever possible, purchase barrel swivels that are painted black to prevent a toothy bluefish from mistaking a shining gold or silver swivel as something good to eat.

A fisherman's pliers like the "Sportmate" or similar brand is an excellent aid to the angler tying his/her/it's own rigs. It acts as the third hand that always is needed to tie a rig for some reason. If you don't have one, substitute with a regular pliers and a fingernail clip.

The components of a rig are assembled with four basic knots: the improved clinch knot, the dropper loop, the end loop and a snelling knot for the hook. All are easily mastered with a little patience and practice, but there are a few helpful tricks. Before tightening a knot always wet it first with saliva (spit) for lubrication. This prevents binding and allows the knot to tighten up evenly. It's also extremely important that a knot is tightened slowly by pulling the ends evenly in opposite direction. If you try to tighten a knot with a quick, jerky movement, it will usually bind incorrectly and be very weak. After a knot has been tied correctly clip the excess line protruding from the knot, but leave at least an eighth of an inch to prevent line from unraveling.

A snelling knot is used to connect a hook to a snell. There are several types, but the one shown is as simple and effective as any. A good snelling knot will have the shank of the hook extending in a straight line from the snell, not off at an angle. The approximate lengths of snells for various species should be: blackfish—8-12"; flounder—8-12"; Fluke—24-36"; weak-

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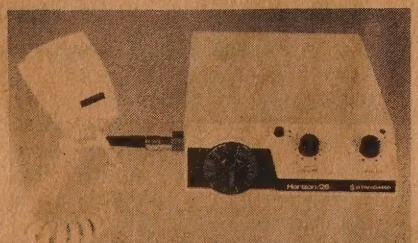

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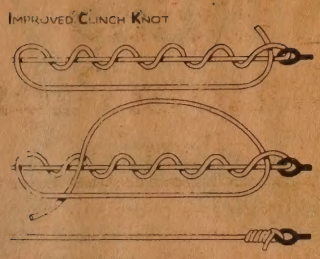
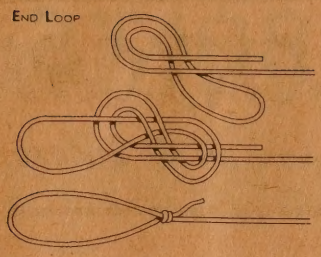
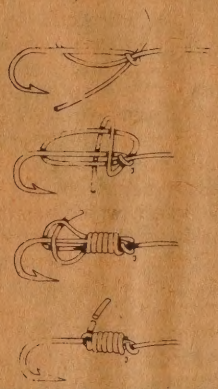
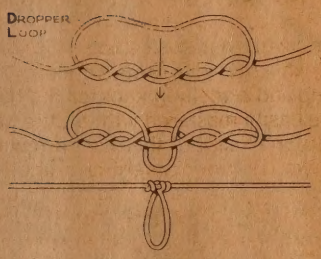




How to Snell a Hook





fish—24-30"; cod—18-24"; porgy—8-12"; seabass—12-15"; Snell lengths are determined by many factors primarily the fisherman's own preference, so don't look for any "perfect" length.

The improved clinch knot is used to connect the leader of the rig to one eye of a barrel swivel and to attach the main line to the second eye. For heavy line 30 to 40 pound test, four turns in the knot is usually sufficient. For the lighter main lines of 6 to 20 lb. test, use 6 or 7 turns on the improved clinch knot. It is very important that the clinch knot tightens correctly—if there is a small loop on one of the turns after tightening, cut the line and try again. Better to tie a new knot than have a big fish break off on you, right?

The dropper loop serves three purposes: it acts as a connecting link between the end of the hook snell and leader, holds the snell out and away from the leader to prevent tangling, and determines the distance between the hook and sinker. A properly tied dropper loop extends straight out at a right angle from the leader, preventing the hook snell from becoming entangled on it. The distance between the sinker and dropper loop is determined by the feeding zone of the fish being sought, which is the distance above the bottom where you want to deliver your baited hook. Approximate distance should be: fluke 6 to 12 inches, cod 3 to 4 feet, weakfish 2 to 3 feet, porgy 6 to 18 inches, seabass 12 to 24 inches, and just above the sinker for flounder.

To tie a dropper loop, form a loop of about three inches in diameter at the point you wish the hook snell to connect on the leader. Pass one end of the leader through the loop five or six times, then separate the twisted strands in the center and pull the opposite side of the loop through this opening as shown in the diagram. Then SLOWLY draw the ends taut. The finished product should be a loop with a one-half to one-inch diameter extending from the leader at a right angle. Some anglers use 3-way swivels in place of dropper loops, but they serve no additional functional purpose, are expensive, and require a minimum of two knots to attach them to the leader. Never add an unnecessary knot to a rig.

The end loop is used in two places on a bottom rig. To attach the hook snell to a dropper loop and to attach the sinker. An end loop with a diameter of one-half to one inch is tied to one end of the hook snell. To attach the snell to the leader, pass the loop of the end loop on the snell over the loop of the dropper loop on the leader. Then pass the hook through the center of the dropper loop and pull the snell through it until the two loops snug up and lock on each other.

The end loop is also used to attach the sinker to the bottom rig. Tie an end loop with a two or three inch diameter to the bottom of the rig. To attach a sinker, pass the loop through the eye of it, drop the sinker through the center of the loop and pull it snug. To change sinkers quickly, just reverse the process. Use of an end loop allows the angler to change sinker weights in a matter of seconds without the need of tying a knot, which would also shorten the distance between the sinker and dropper loop.

Next week we'll talk about tying the basic bottom rigs for local species.

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BY FRED GUARDINEER

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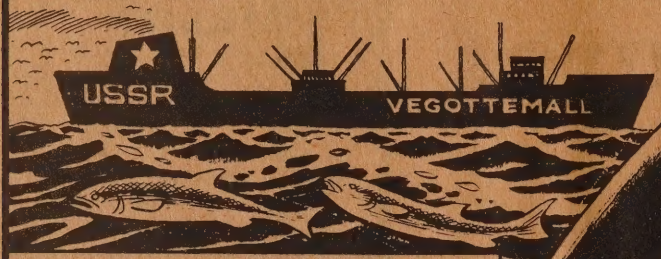

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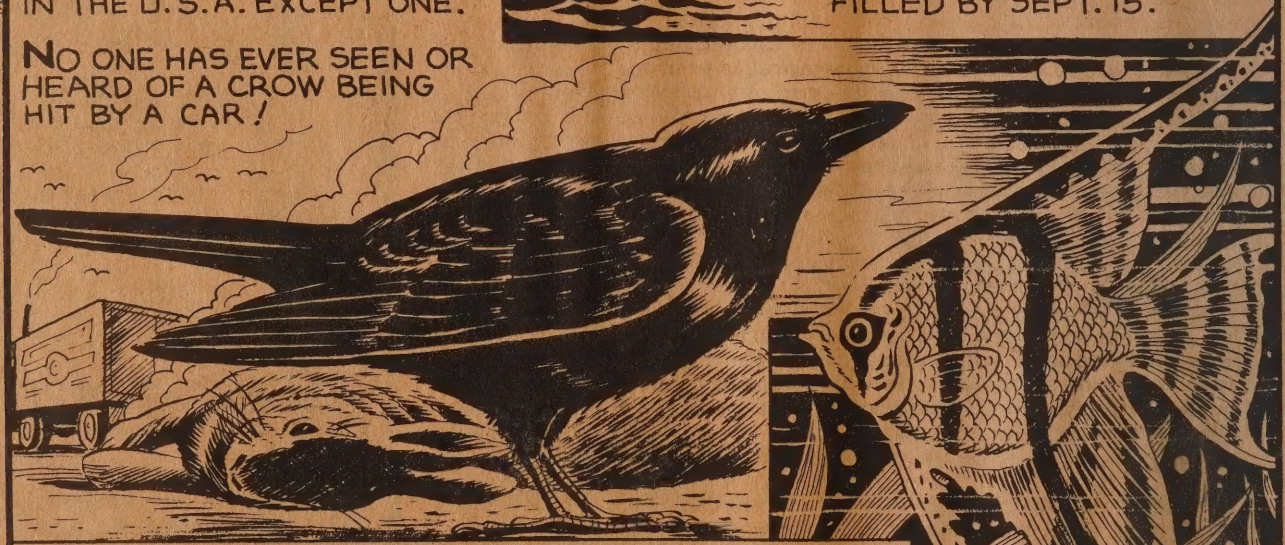


THE U.S. "COAST GUARD NEWS" REPORTS THAT A $30,000 22-FT. CARAVELLE BOAT EXPLODED AND BURNED BECAUSE OF A CRACK IN THE VENT HOSE CONNECTION AT THE FUEL TANK. SOME 1,066 "*CARAVELLE CIV-22 WAHOO IV PPEMIER*" BOATS BUILT BETWEEN JAN. 1, 1972 AND SEPT. 30, 1974 MAY CONTAIN THE SAME DEFECT. THE BOAT MANUFACTURING COMPANY WAS DISSOLVED AUG. 8, 1975. IF YOU OWN A "*CARAVELLE*" CONTACT...BOATING SAFETY BRANCH, THIRD COAST GUARD DISTRICT, GOVERNORS ISLAND, N.Y. 10004.

SO DELICATE ARE THE FINS OF THE ANGEL FISH THAT THE LEAST CONTACT WILL DAMAGE THEM. NATURE PROVIDES THE *EXTRA PROTECTION* OF BONY TRAILERS WHICH WARN OF OBSTACLES AHEAD.

Fashioning Hair & Feather Lures

by Dick Mermon

Part One

Each year lures come and go, but the only device which cosmetically has changed little in time and still maintains its popularity is the "bucktail".

Big lures are designed to catch big fish, but there is an exception to every rule and one size bucktail will entice fish of all magnitudes. Hair baits imitate various types of forage. In the eyes of predatory fish, the activated hair can change its formation from a dancing shrimp, into a darting motion of an alarmed bait, or to the wiggle of a sandeel. Lures manufactured of wood, hard plastic, or metal maintain but one type of swimming action. They cannot bring into being the transformation as bucktails do. Predator fish do procrastinate at times when a different size object enters the midst of bait they are chasing. With a bucktail, hair jig, or even a feather lure, hesitation is never a factor. When there is no bait available to these predator fish, hair jigs stimulate the appetite.

With winter upon us, there comes a time when boredom takes over and the need for something to rejuvenate the fishing spirit arises. Hair lure tying can activate this spark into a warm burning fire. Those jig heads which were thrown aside during the active fishing period, now play an important part. In fact any of the hair lures which look deteriorated, chipped, straggly, or even discolored from rusted hooks, are the ones to reconstruct cosmetically.

If for some reason there are no old bucktails or feather lures available (and you made a boo-boo if there are none), many of the tackle shops now sell nude jig heads of various sizes. They will probably also be able to supply the hair or deer tails which will be tied to the bare heads.

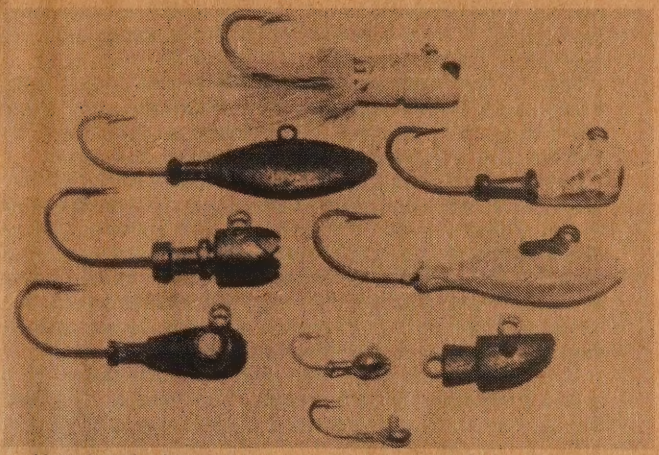
Before starting any project of this type, all materials needed should be on hand. This saves time and temper. The principle substances to be used on the hook may either be bucktail, hair, nylon or feathers. At this time bucktail is required.

Next, a spool of winding thread, to secure the hair onto the hook. It may be of any type for the present. The significant thing is to have one, even if snatched from the wife's (providing she sews), or mother's sewing box. Rod winding thread is the most suitable of all and color plays no degree of importance.

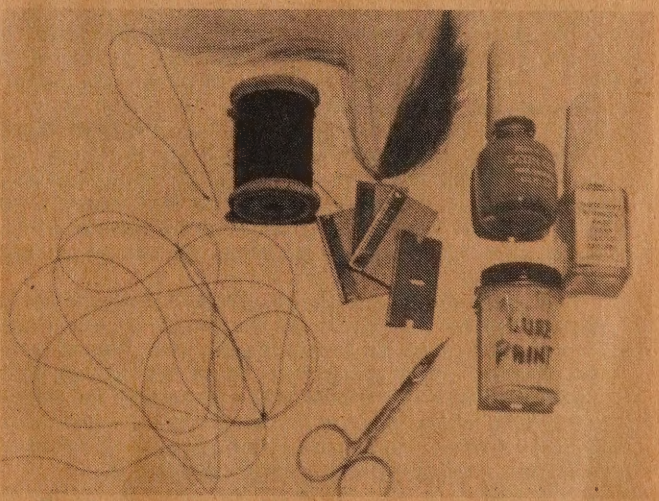
Small scissors, or several safety razor blades (single edge braced on top) should be close by. These are used to cut hair away from the whole tail and excess from the head of the jig.

For the sealing and gluing, a small bottle of color preserver (clear lacquer) is required. This liquid is the same as in rod building color preserver. The lacquer penetrates the threads and seals the winding together with the hair. If the wife or sister has colorless nail polish or any type for that matter, borrow it. It will do the same task.

For the finishing touch, a small can or jar of white paint is in order. Beyond all others I have found autobody paint to be the best suited for this job. A quick drying enamel will put a hard coat onto the lure.



Unpainted, chipped or ragged looking heads are the ones which need new cosmetic look for next year's fishing.



The basic needs to repair or reconstruct new hair imitation baits.

Commencing with obtaining enough cut hair to make several jigs, small pinches, or quantities should be cut from the tail, as close to the base as possible. These small pinches should be not larger than three eighth inch in diamter. Cut just enough for one lure and place them neatly in three small piles.

From the spool of thread, strip a piece off about six inches in length and place it to one side. Draw out from the same spool another length of three feet. Secure one end of this lead onto the back of the jig head with two half hitch knots. Almost every head has an indentation for this tie on. If there is none, the

molded head will have some sort of lead extending out onto the hook's shank. If the jig has this extention, secure the thread to it in the same manner.

Hold the shank of the hook between the thumb and the middle finger with the point facing downward. It is actually the base of the bottom of the lure. The entire unit should be held horizontally while placing a pinch of hair (longest part towards the rear) on the shank and bring the index finger down on top of it. The purpose is to secure the hair for position number one. Before securing the clump onto the head, position the hair for desired length, which the lure will actually be. Move the hair forward for short lures or further back of the head for longer. Once the desired fullness is reached, the pinch of hair is fastened in place with the length of thread attached.

Wind the thread about the base ends weakly three times, then pull to tighten. Do not try to lace up this pinch of hair too tight, as it will probably have to be somewhat separated about the head later. Place two half hitch knots to secure the thread and hair in position.

Reverse the hook so that the point is now in an upright station, being held in the same manner as previously. A small pinch of cut hair is placed onto the shank for the second time. The distance is equaled with the first batch of tail hair.

Loop the base ends three times and secure with the help of two half hitches. Immediately after, place the third bit of hair on the opposite or open section of the hook's shank. It should be the last amount used for the bucktail jig. Loosely, with the winding thread, link all hair bunches together. Bind the entire amount of hair tightly. As the thread is wound about, the hairs will flare outwardly at both ends. Place a few thread loops near the base end to hold them from flaring.

This is why the thinnest hair, which is on the tail of the the animal should be used on this type of lure. Buck or deer hair is hollow. The hollowness becomes thicker toward the base or near the skin. As the hair is tightened about the jig head, the winding thread collapses the hollowness bending the base end outwardly. A few loops about the foward and back ties will prevent the expected flare.

Winding direction for the final stabilizing of the hair is from the fingers holding it, towards the head. Slight tension at first should be exerted and as the center, or main holding area is reached, emit more tension.

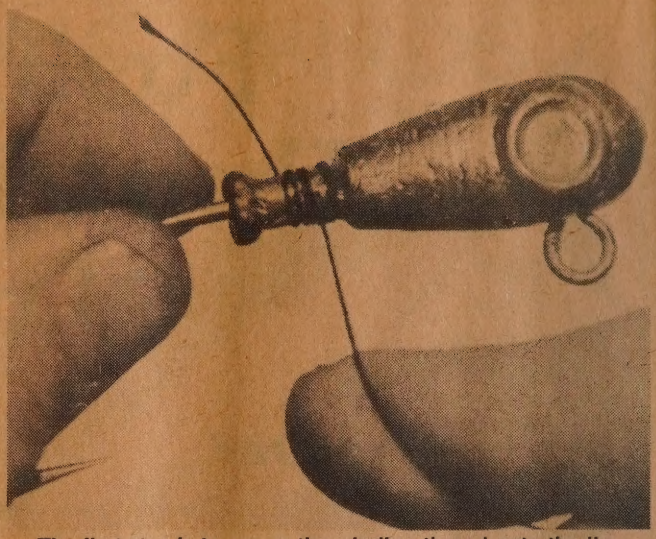
Before the entire lure is securely tied, place two half hitches on the head and winding thread. Move the hairs equally about the lead head so that there are no large clumps in one single section. Once all the hair is even, cut the expanded base hair as close to the winding as possible and the amount which overlaps the head section. Use either the scissors or safety razor.

When this step is completed, continue the winding and removal process until almost all the thread is used. During the final stage of winding, place the six inch piece of thread onto the overwind in a loop form. Finish the balance of the securing thread over the small loop and place its end through the loop. Pull the two ends of the loop through the underwinds and out the other side. It should draw the winding thread end out with it, locking the end under the overwinds.

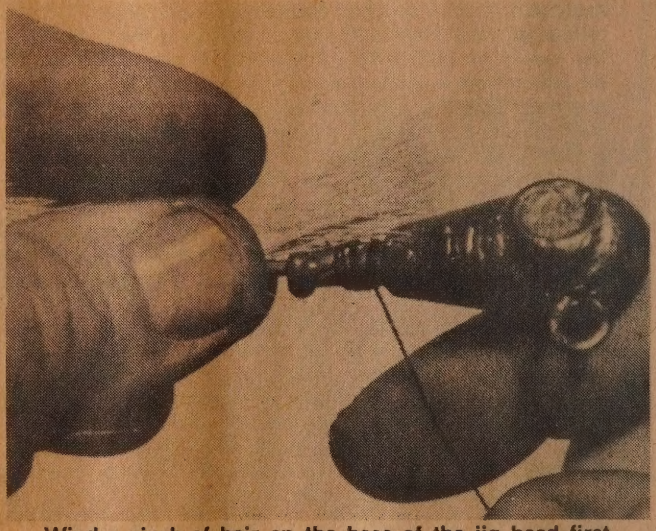
With scissors or razor, shear off the excess flared hair and end thread. To assure the threads and hair will not diminish from location, place several coats of lacquer, color preserver, or colorless nail polish on it. This will conclude a satisfactory sealing process.

When the lacquer has completely dried over the windings, dip the lure head into the paint. It should be inserted deep enough to cover the entire head and windings. The paint will filter through the hair and into any crevices left open by the lacquer. Allow the first dipping to dry, then redip for a better finish. Hang the wet painted bucktail lure by its hook and allow the excess paint to run off.

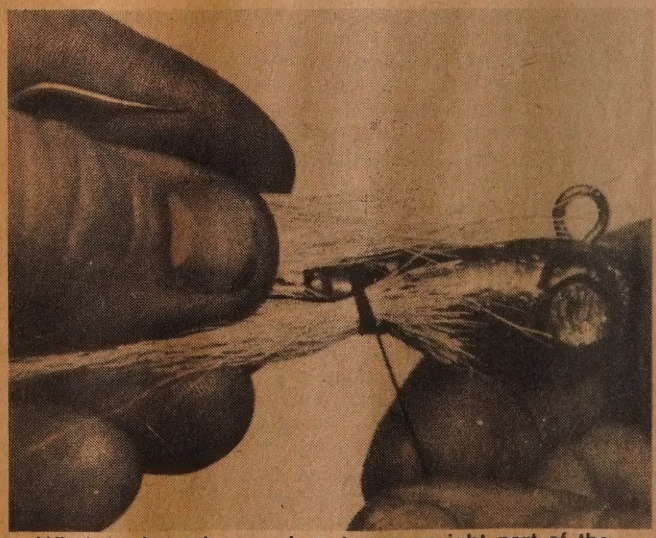
Eyes may then be painted on the head with a dot on each side, for a more realistic lure.



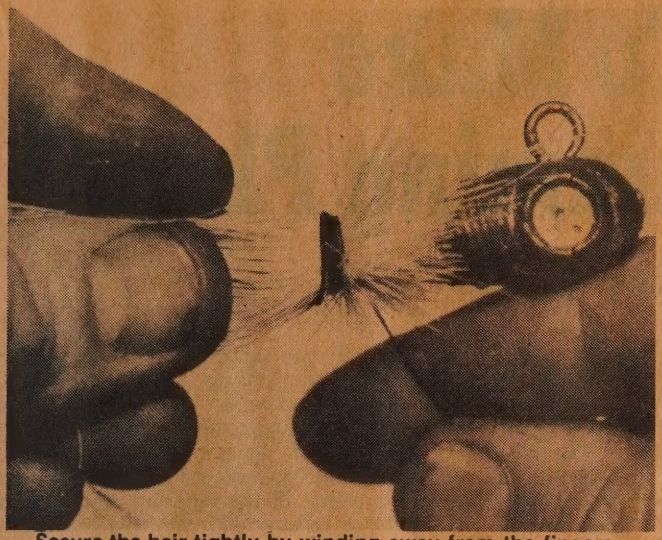
The first step is to secure the winding thread onto the jig head indentation by three half hitch knots.



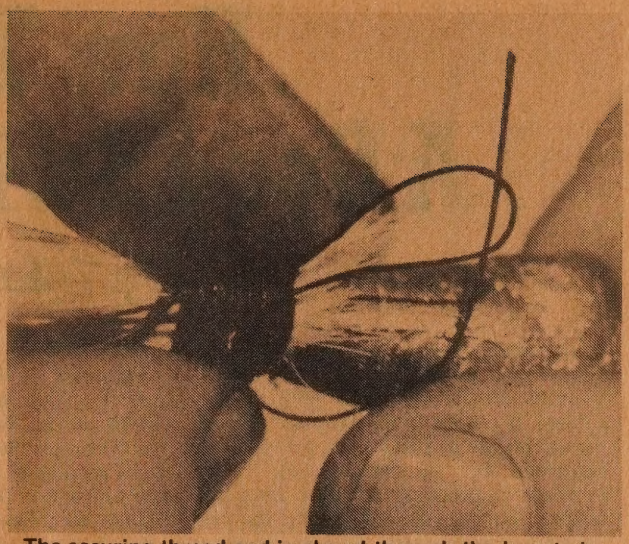
Wind a pinch of hair on the base of the jig head first, holding it down in position with the index finger.



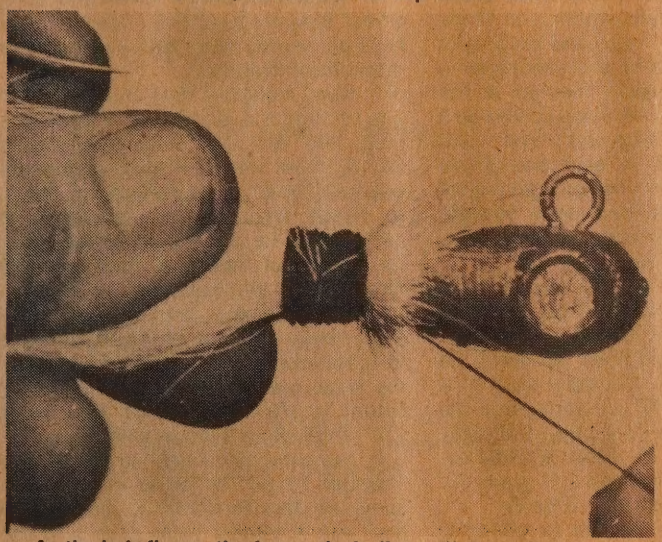
Wind the largest amount on top or upright part of the lure.



Secure the hair tightly by winding away from the fingers which hold the hair, notice the flareup of the hair.

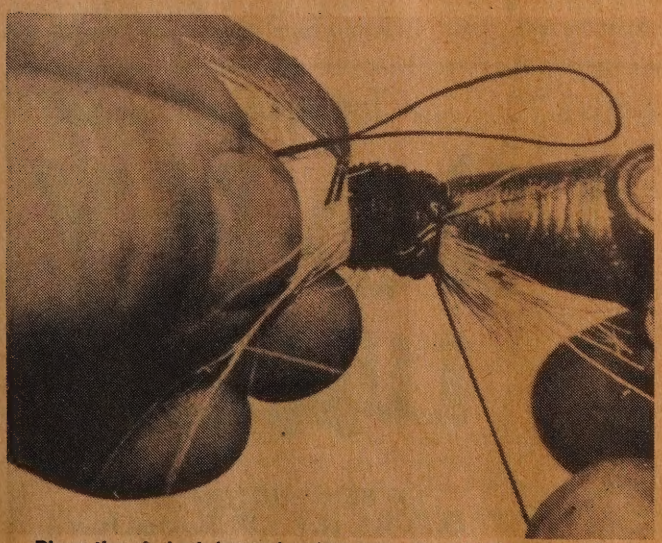


The securing thread end is placed through the loop to be drawn under and out of the holding binds.



As the hair flares, the forward winding will flaten it down.

Excess flared hair, protruding from under the bind threads are cut off.



Place the six inch looped string onto the winding threads for the final lockup.

Dip the lure head into the paint beyond the binding threads for it to saturate within the hair.

How To Make A Good Swimming Plug

by Whiting Evans

Inspired by the series of articles which appeared in about fifteen issues of the Long Island Fisherman in 1975 on the subject of home manufacture of surf fishing plugs, so beautifully written and explained by my friend Jack "The Professor" Frech, I thought that my fellow do-it-yourselfers might like to have some instructions on how to make one type of swimmer which Jack did not describe. This plug actually looks like and swims like—the well-known "Atom Jr."

Although I am fairly well-known for my long ago experience at what is now called "Evans Rock" at Montauk Point and also for the words I have written on the subject of recipes for cooking fish under my assumed name of "The Casting Gourmet", I truly love to fish—for anything that swims. Any fish from the giant tuna, broadbill swordfish, marlin down to the flounder, mackerel or whiting, sends me! My pulses quicken, my adrenalin starts to flow more rapidly, my blood pressure heightens (not dangerously) and my interest peaks—even when someone mentions the word "fish"! In other words, I'm a kook of the first water—even as you who are reading what I've written.

I also love to make things and I'm fortunate in having a workshop in the cellar of my home which is fairly well equipped with the necessary tools for working in either metal or wood.

The Atom Jr. has long been one of my favorite plugs for use under certain conditions. So, not wishing to squander the necessary moola I figured that I might be able to make the plug myself. And I did! And it works beautifully! So, maybe you'd like to make it too.

1. Get yourself some clear, white, sugar-pine. You can't buy it in dowel form so you'll have to whittle it to shape either with a knife, rasps and sandpaper or by means of a lathe and sandpaper—which is by far the easier method. At the plug's initial stage, the wood should be 5 and 3/8ths inches long and 1 and 1/8th inches in diameter. At each end of this cylinder, draw cross lines at right angles to each other and then draw straight lines along the perimeter connecting the ends of the cross lines. (See Fig. 1.)

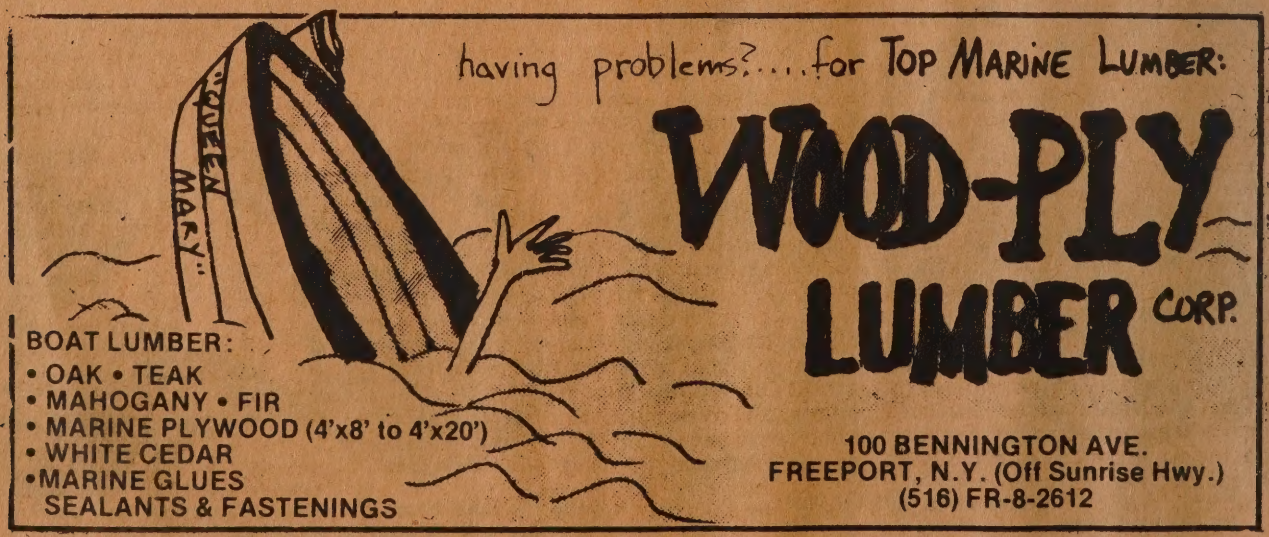
2. Now, draw a line around the cylinder 2 inches from either end and another line around 9/16th inches from the other end. These lines represent the points at which you will taper each end. Also draw a circle ½" in diameter at the end of what will be your plug. Cut away the wood outside of these boundaries, rounding off the front end and gradually tapering off the rear end. (Fig. 2)

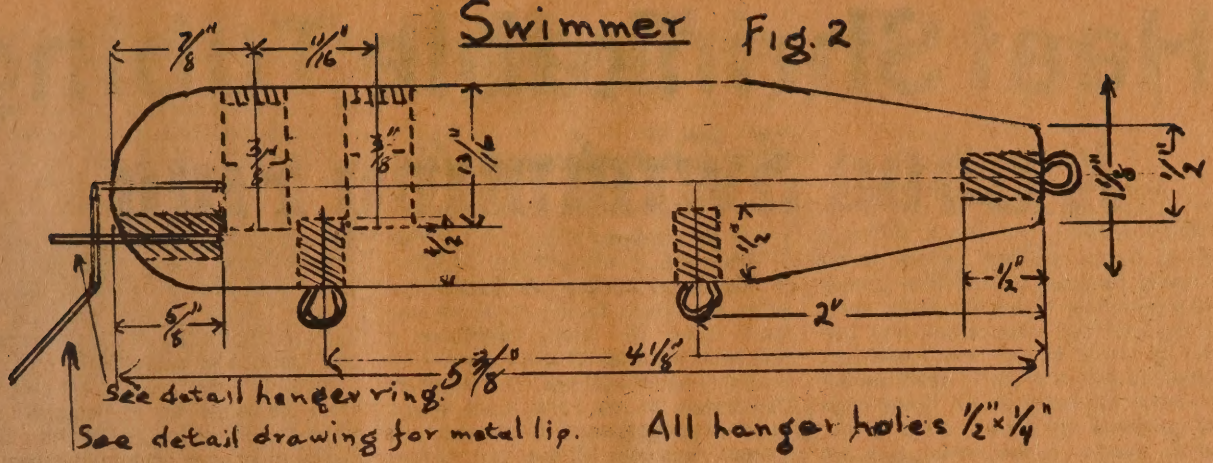
3. Mark a point on the longitudinal line on what you want the bottom of the plug to be—2" from the end and another 4 and 1/8th inches from the end. These will be your hanger holes on the bottom of the plug. Using a ¼" drill, these holes should be ½" deep. Also drill the same sized hole in the tail of the plug and another hanger hole in the head. This latter hole should be drilled so that the center of the hole will be 9/32nds inches parallel with the bottom—5/8th deep from the front end.

4. Holding the plug in a vise and using a hack saw, cut a slit 5/8" deep into the head of the plug into which you will later insert the metal lip.

5. Now, mark two dots on the median line running the length of the top of the plug; the first 7/8" and the second 25/16" from the front end. Drill these holes 13/16ths" deep using a 3/8" drill. (I found these holes necessary to compensate for the weight of the metal lip. I used stainless steel which was .025 mms thick. If you use thinner metal; say .013 or .015 mms, you need not drill these holes). The reason for the holes is to lighten the front end of the plug. After the holes are drilled, seal them up by cutting a 3/8" birch dowel into slices 1/8" thick. Seal them in with epoxy.

6. You are now ready to mount the "hanger rings" or brass eyes in the holes. As Jack Frech has described, the best way to cement these eyes is to use epoxy. I use a product called "Devcon 5 minute Epoxy". It comes in two tubes. You mix equal parts of both; the result is





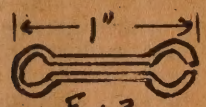


Fig. 3
Hanger Ring
1/16" brass wire

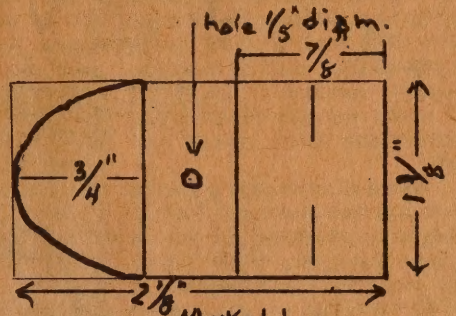
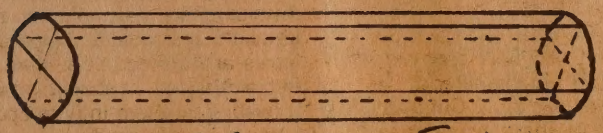


Fig. 4



Initial Stage Fig. 1.

a water transparent cement which hardens in 5 minutes. You can mount only about 4 brass eyes at a time with one mixing. It is available at almost any good hardware store. The brass eyes are hard to find as per my own experience. They can be obtained from the Midland Tackle Co., 66 Route 17, Sloatsburg, New York 10974. Ask for Brass eyes #W-5. They cost $1.35 per 75 eyes. Do not mount the brass eye in the front head hole. This one you have to make yourself. (See illustration)

To make this hanger rig, buy some brass rods from your hardware store 1/16" in diameter. This gadget is longer than that which you can buy. First, cut a length of brass rod about 3 inches long; make the eye in the center of this short rod and put the two ends of the rod through the 1/8" hole of the metal lip. Then, bend the ends as shown in Fig. 3.

7. To make the metal lip use a metal shears and cut it as shown in Fig. 4. Bend it as you see in the illustration at the head of the plug. Smooth the edges with a fine file and drill a 1/8" hole where indicated. Mount the metal lip in the slit at the head of the plug and at the same time insert the hanger rig in its hole beneath the slit. Use epoxy for both.

8. Most of your work is now finished. Be sure to sandpaper the plug and get it really smooth. I find that the easiest way to paint the plug is to first apply boiled linseed oil with a brush. Hang it to dry and not until it is dry, to paint it. For the primer coat I douse the whole plug into a can of white latex paint. When that has dried I then spray the plugs with any desired color from a spray can. I then like to finish it off by spraying it with quick dry varnish and then dribbling metallic "glitter" on it while the varnish is still wet. To make the plug really look alive, mount a couple of decal fish eyes in the right places.

9. As a final act, clinch two open-eye 2/0 triple hooks in the bottom hook hangers and for the tail hook use an open eye, stainless steel 5/0 Siwash hook on which you have previously wound a sparshish (my own word!) amount of bucktail. (Before doing this however, it's a good idea to file the shank of the hook so that it is slightly rough. By so doing the hairs in the bucktail will stay in place and not slide down the hook.)

When you cast this plug into the surf or any still water and retrieve it slowly, even if a fish doesn't grab it (and they do!) YOU will get a kick out of its really wiggly, swimming motion.

Heat Shrinkable Tubing

by Don Avondolio

After reading the many different fishing magazines and various tackle company catalogs, it becomes obvious that a person can obtain almost any sport fishing lure that imitates bait that fish feed on. Most of the time these bait imitations (when properly used) attract and catch fish successfully. These lures are generally made from either wood, metal, plastic, rubber, hair and are especially manufactured for the sport fisherman by recognized tackle companies. I have, (like most amateur tackle makers), always tried to either duplicate (economically) successfully marketed tackle, or create new bait imitators that would attract and catch various fish consistently.

A fairly recent product that attracted my interest was heat shrinkable tubing. This tubing is manufactured and sold in an expanded state, and when heated above its crystalline melting point, it recovers (or shrinks) to its original extruded diameter. Thus, if before shrinking, an object (either irregular or uniformly shaped) is inserted into the tubing and then heated uniformly; the tubing will cling or take shape to the object until maximum shrinkage is obtained. Consequently, this tubing can be attached very easily and tightly to any tackle media without the use of adhesive or hardware. Because of the moded appearance of the shrink tubing, different shapes can be produced that duplicate common bait profiles.

To duplicate the slithery, swimming actions common to ocean creatures, tails or skirts can be added to the tubing. Using a sharp pair of scissors or shears, cut lengths of these tails which can be added to a section of the tubing. While the uncut portion is attached to the weight or head part of the lure. Once one learns the basic handling procedures, casting and trolling lures can be constructed in minimum time with very little effort.

Technically speaking, this tubing is manufacturd by many companies, and used in the engineering field for various purposes; a few of which are—cable and component protective jackets, molded type electrical coverings, and connector strain relief transitions. Advantages are toughness, water resistance and flexibility. Heat shrink tubing is made from a wide variety of plastics such as polyolefins, polyvinyl, neoprene, silicone, and other specialty type materials. Colors are available in black, white, red, blue and yellow in expanded sizes ranging from 3/64 inch thru 4 inches (inside diameter.

I have experimented with some of the latter mentioned tubing materials and have found for tackle purposes a polyolefin material RT-876 excellent for flexibility and toughness. The Raychem Corporation in Dix Hills, Long Island New York produces this material and Schaal Associates at 631 Old Willets Path, Hauppauge, New York 11787, is one of the stock distributors. RT-876 tubing is stocked in 4 ft lengths and multiples.

EQUIPMENT REQUIRED

TACKLE APPLICATIONS

Prices for expanded sizes ½, ¾ inch and 1 inch are 61 cents per foot, 8 cents per foot, and $1.14 per foot respectively with the tax included. Naturally, larger quantities will reduce the price per foot significantly. Also, as of this date, I am not aware of any tackle shop stocking this material, probably because of its relative newness as a fishing tackle material. When comparing material cost to several similar products on the tackle market, you will find a comparable savings appreciated. Also, you will have the advantage of controlling tackle sizes and shapes to your individual liking.

Heat shrink tubing handling procedures involve two simple rules that are applicable to all situations:

Rule 1. This material shrinks 50% from the expanded (or supplied size). Thus if a 1 inch inside diameter size is purchased, after heat shrinking, the tubing recovers to a minimum inside diameter of ½ inch. This also means that any object inserted into this tubing prior to heating must be one half inch or larger to produce a tight bond.

Rule 2. This material requires a minimum temperature of 212 degrees F for heat shrinking. Controlling the heat by slowly rotating either the heat gun or material, results in a more uniform shrinking. The heat source used for the shrink process can be obtained several ways. I personally use a hair dryer (blower) rated at 215 watts to find that heat control is best by keeping the gun at a distance of ½ inch from the tubing. If you own a hair dryer, measure the temperature at the output side using a thermometer, and if the reading is between 212 degres F and 250 F, the blower should be more than adequate. Recommended optional methods of shrinking are by using heat lamps, oven heat, or by boiling water.

Tackle Applications: a). Skirted treble Hooks. (See Sketch 1) Using the 50% shrinkage rule, select a tubing size that will fit your hook shank diameter. Using a pair of scissors, cut 1/8 inch wide tails in the tubing up to the hook shank portion. Place the cut tubing over the hook. Using a heat source, shrink the tubing over the shank uniformly. It is important that the cut tail section not be heated (as flexibility will be reduced significantly). b). Jig Skirts. Various shaped jig head and hook combinations can be obtained at your local tackle store, or from Midland Tackle Co., 66 Route 17, Sloatsburg, NY 10974. Again using the proper size expanded tubing, cut tail strips (the longer the better for swimming action). Then place the cut tubing over the hook and shrink down on the head section, using an intermittent, moving hot air flow. c.) Plugs, spoon. Skirts in tandem can be attached to your lures to add more swimming action. Contrasting colors in tubing sections can be combined. Measure the largest diameter of your lure and select a tube inside diameter approximately double

(slightly less) the size. Heat and shrink over the rear section of the lure.

d). Egg Sinker Jig—(See sketch 2) After cutting the standard skirt tails, shrink a ¾ inch expanded tube size over a 1½ oz. egg sinker. The tubing will neck down, if heated properly. A swivel can be attached on the front portion by utilizing wire leader material and a crimping sleeve. The treble hook shown is then attached by using another crimp sleeve at the hook eye. To prevent the hook from pulling into the sleeving, use a third crimp sleeve (as a stop) inside the tubing, near the head. Eyes can be painted on the head if preferred. e). Squid Imitation—(See Sketch 3) Using a 1½ ounce drill and ¾'' inside diameter tubing, a realistic looking squid can be constructed. I prefer white tubing for daytime fishing, and black for night or cloudy days. After preparing the squid arms portion, insert the drail and steel washer as shown.

The washer is approximately 1 inch outside diameter and should be removed after shrinkage is complete. Apply the heat uniformly from the head to the rear, allowing the natural squid-like profile to take form. Most drails are supplied assembled with swivels and snaps attached. All that is required is to place a proper size treble hook onto the rear snap. If your drail does not have snaps and swivels attached, use the procedure in sketch 2 for hook and swivel assembly. Eyes should be painted on the stepped down section of the lure for effect.

Remember, that these tackle applications are only a few examples of what can be produced with heat shrinkage tubing, a pair of scissors, and a heat source. So, invest in some tubing, use your own ingenuity, and I'm sure you will find tackle making both interesting and creative.

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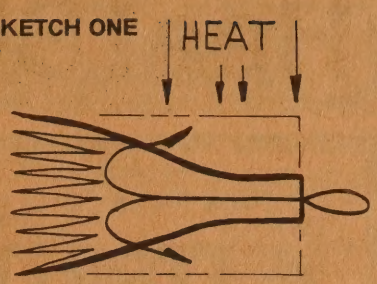

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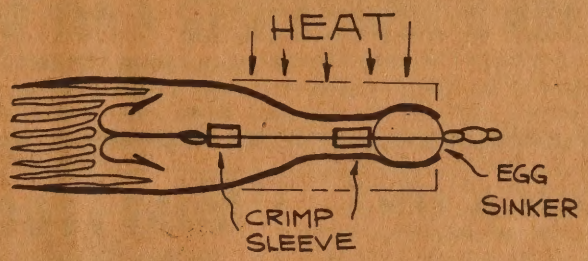

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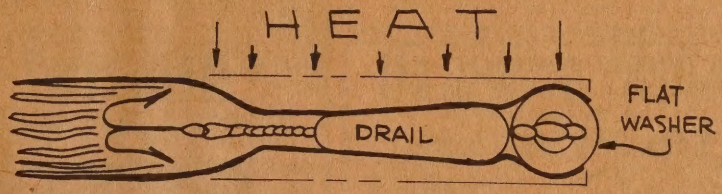

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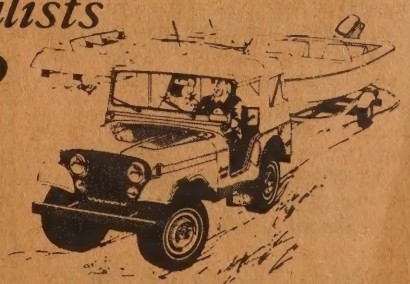

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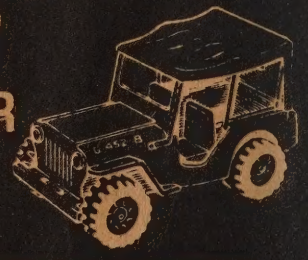

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SOUTH SHORE Fishing Report

MONTAUK

Captain Lester Behan of the **Peconic Queen III** told us that the codfishing has been terrific. On Friday 40 men took over 400 fish and on Saturday 95 people boated over 1000 codfish. Joseph O'Conner was high-hook with 33 cod 8 to 12 pounds. John O'Peinkin of New Jersey had 15 cod for the day including a 20 pounder that took the pool of $411. Les reported a steady pick all day southeast of Block Island. The first Nantucket wreck trip of the year will take place on April 4th, Sunday at 10 P.M. and return Monday at 10 P.M. There is a $50 fare, and it is limited to 50 fishermen. Call Les for further info.

Captain Richard Rade of the **Marlin III** said that a new run of cod has come in and the fishing this past week has really picked up for cod and pollack. On Saturday and Sunday over 300 fish were caught and on Saturday the pool was taken by a 38 pound cod off Block Island.

Captain Paul Forsberg of the **Viking Star** told us that the codfishing has really picked up tremendously with 1200 fish taken by his fares over the period of Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Some men had up to 18 fish, with sized running average 7-14 pounds, biggest 38 pounds. The **Star** is fishing Block Island waters.

MORICHES BAY

L&M Marine reports 51 keeper flounder ½ to ¾ pound class taken over the weekend at buoy 46 on bloodworms, no chum. Anglers Gregg Warcholak, Phil Dancona and Paul Rallo did the honors.

CAPTREE

The **Captain Scotty** was doing "zilch" with the codfish so switched over to flounder on Sunday. Over 100 flounder were taken which is the best start in years for this early in the season. Best areas were the Babylon Head Buoy and in West Channel. The fish were clean, fat and on the move, which is very surprising.

LINDENHURST

Captain Jay Porter of the **Bullet** maintains that fishing for cod and pollack is actually better in the summer on offshore wrecks than open bottom fishing in the winter. He says that he will

SHEEPSHEAD BAY

be proving that fact, once the **Bullet** arrives from the builder at the anchorage in May.

MERRICK

Roy Flood of **Mako Marina** in Freeport called to say that on Thursday angler Joe Carter of Tournament Anglers had 29 flounder from Zach's Bay on clam, and that Roy Greenburg of **Merrick Marine Supplies** in Bellmore bagged 67 flounder at Squaw Island on Saturday from a ½ to a pound on clam and on Sunday behind Merrick at the S turn and Rowboat Alley had 9 flounder weighing ¾ of a pound each on bloodworm and clam chum on an incoming tide.

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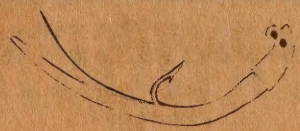

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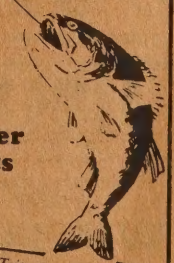

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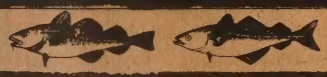

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George Valentine of **Four Winds Bait and Tackle** reports bass are still being taken at Crab Meadow on worms at night and on artificials during the day, and that flounders are being taken up to a pound from the Northshore docks on blood and sandworms.

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SURF SKILLS
(Continued from page 8.)

and wave action. There was an exceptionally bright moon, and those on the beach were on higher ground and relatively close to our position; finally, a number of them were regulars.

Apparently most or all of them had fished this rip on one or more of the preceeding nights, with very limited success occuring on the final stages of the tide. Evidently they had convinced themselves that the early stages of the tide change would not be productive and that the two figures in the water were wasting their time. Mentally, they were not prepared for the unexpected and limited their observation to casual glances over a cup of coffee and between conversation.

Through the years, yours truly has had such experiences on numerous occasions and in all honesty must admit that I've not always been on the successful end of the situation.

One bad habit which some anglers have (yours truly included), is a failure to recognize that on occasion they convince themselves that conditions at a particular spot are wrong, when in reality they were simply not what had been hoped for. For instance, on the way to the beach you build up your hopes, envisioning the very best of water conditions, a favorable wind, comfortable temperature, evidence of an abundance of bait and the choicest spot all to yourself. But upon arriving it is discovered that none of these conditions are what you had hoped for. There's a rough surf, strong and chilly wind, no sign of bait, plenty of fishermen and your tide calculations were somewhat inaccurate. If you fish here tonight you'll have to get wet, cold and compete with others and cast your butt off to get any distance in that wind. So, off you go looking for what you think may be greener pastures, when in reality it's the situation you pictured in your mind which you seek...an easy night of fishing, a dream night. Of course, more often than not, the inevitable happens, you strike out while the others blitz the fish.

In general, at night, swimming lures are favored over jigs and popping plugs simply because they'll produce a far more regular basis. Now it may surprise a few readers that the use of jigs at night was not totally ruled out, but there are rare occasions when using them pays off. Now don't interpret this as a recommendation to load your plug bag with tin jigs on those night ventures, it is only mentioned to place emphasis upon the unexpected and what can result from experimentation.

To illustrate, one night some six or seven years ago a half dozen lads were fishing into a ferocious wind, casting for distance was an impossibility. All were using what one would normally use in the area being fished, namely bottle plugs and darters. Bait was in evidence, the rip was wild, but no fish. I kept mumbling to my companion that perhaps we weren't quite reaching the fish and remembering a past experience, half heartedly suggested that the use of a tin might be worth a try. Laziness and pride promoted fear that some regular might discover that I was using a tin at night which discouraged me from retreating to the buggy to obtain such a lure. Fortunately for all present, my partner wasn't as foolish and elected to try it. The result was that everyone took a good number of bass, most of which were in the teens and mid-twenties and most taken on Hopkins jigs. Of course the presence of a large crowd, all using swimmers, would have prevented such an experiment as the differences in casting distance and speed of retrieve would have resulted in all sorts of tangles and arguments. On two other nights in the Jones Beach surf, the only thing that seemed to interest the bass was a jig very slowly bounced and often dragged along the bottom.

With respect to popping or surface plugs, many a fish has fallen for such a lure during the dark of night. Worked with a slow and gentle popping action, or in the same manner as a darter, with slow retrieve and little or no rod action, they can at times be particularly effective.

Returning to normality, most swim ming lures have a built in action and under normal conditions are handled in a specific manner for best results, and simply because of their design. Darter type plugs are at their best when fished in a rip using a very slow but steady retrieve. Those lures equipped with an action lip such as the Atom Swimmer and the Rebel, are normally worked in much the same manner with variations in speed dependent upon the movement of the water. The most productive rate of retrieval for most, if not all swimmers, is "usually" the slowest at which the desired action is obtained, which in general is a lazy swimming motion. In a current or rip an attentive angler can tell when he's achieved that speed through the sense of feel. A vibration or slight resistance, and in a strong rip with certain plugs, a definite throbbing action is felt.

The standard retrieve is the way to start an evening but there are times when a slight or even radical departure, from the norm, will be the key to success. The angler who catches no fish and casts night after night like a machine, employing no variations in the handling of his lures, has no justification to complain about his lack of success.

Remember.....with fishing as in most of life's endeavors, there is often a very fine line between success and failure.

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The Long Island
FISHERMAN
FISHING TRIP CONTEST

Mr. F. Funari of Islip Manor called into LIF a description of his car by the Friday deadline to become this weeks LIF Litter Box Contest Winner. Mr. Funari has been sent a check for $10 and has also chosen a free fishing for two aboard the "Peconic Queen" for his prize.

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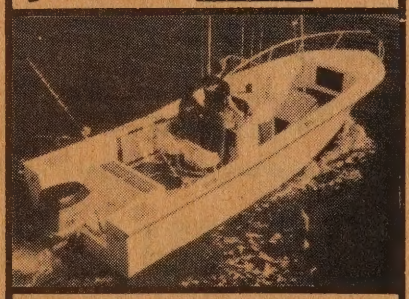

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N.Y. BIGHT Fishing Report

FREEPORT

The **Starstream II** took lots of ling and whiting over the weekend, filling sacks and pails. Captain Richie Kessinger is putting the boat into the shipyard Monday for a week or two to get everything crisp and fresh for the new season. Watch the **Starstream's** ads for the latest changes.

The **Capt. Al** had one cod and a good catch of whiting on Sunday, with whiting being the main stay during the past week. Starting on Saturday, the **Captain Al** will be sailing for flounder at 7 A.M. daily.

Captain Johnny A's **Miss Freeport** has been doing it to the tune of 12 to 15 flounder per man up to 1 pound fishing Squaw Island, Swift Creek and the end of Long Creek with bloodworms according to Captain John's son, Mike.

Captain Sy Karlin of the **Blue Fin** is having a new boat built at present which he will add to the present **Blue Fin**, forming a **Blue Fin Fleet**. It will seat 60 passengers, with a roomy cabin, will be a fast fiberglass job carrying 49 offshore and 60 in the bay. Power will be twin diesels. Night bluefishing and moonlight sails will be on this boat which is expected to arrive in May in time for fluke and blues. Full electronics will be on board and women's accommodations.

Anthony's Fishing Station reports flounder fishing has started with fair catches taken over the weekend in the ¾ to 1 pound class at Swift Creek and off Guy Lombardo's.

ISLAND PARK

Captain Clem of the **Commodore** reports pretty good flounder fishing, that the fish are out of the mud and moving, with deep holes giving the most action on worms and fresh clam. Average catch a dozen fish per man, mixed sizes ½ to ¾ of a pound. On Sunday 23 flatties were taken by angler Frank Herskowitz, and the pool went over 2 pounds.

SHEEPSHEAD BAY

Captain Larry Krim of the open boat **Eagle** reports that he is presently doing very well at the Mudhole on big whiting and ling with most anglers filling a 5 gallon pail with fish. Larry is also hitting the BA buoy when the tides so dictate. This fishing has been improving steadily all week which is a good sign that whiting and ling will be around for awhile.

The **Helen II** reports Friday's whiting and ling fishing excellent, Saturday good and Sunday very good at the Mudhole on medium and large fish.

Captain Joe of the open boat **Blue Sea II** tells us that the boat will be out of the shipyard in about a week and will definitely be out in time to get in on the whiting and ling action.

Captain Fred of the **Amberjack IV** has been dividing his time between Ambrose and BA area and been taking good sized ling and whiting all week and weekend. One fare lost a 25 pound cod just as he brought him to the surface on Sunday. Everybody moan. The **Amberjack** will begin offshore wreck fishing in April. Call Capt. Fred for dates.

Angler Bill Mathes of New York City fishing on the **Palace** took about a 37 pound red hake, reportedly the first catch of this type in about 25 years.

TIDE TABLES

ON →	SANDY HOOK		NEW LONDON		WILLETS POINT		BRIDGE-PORT	
DAY	AM	PM	AM	PM	AM	PM	AM	PM
3/4 THURSDAY	9:44	9:59	11:23	11:44	12:44	12:58	12:28	1:21
3/5 FRIDAY	10:21	10:37	:	12:02	1:16	1:35	1:37	1:59
3/6 SATURDAY	11:00	11:17	12:24	12:48	1:53	2:16	2:17	2:44
3/7 SUNDAY	11:41	11:59	1:09	1:38	2:36	3:02	3:03	3:31
3/8 MONDAY	:	12:33	2:00	2:34	3:26	3:54	3:55	4:27
3/9 TUESDAY	12:54	1:31	2:56	3:38	4:18	4:50	4:51	5:28
3/10 WEDNESDAY	1:55	2:39	3:57	4:38	5:17	5:51	5:54	6:29
3/11 THURSDAY	3:04	3:50	4:53	5:30	6:20	6:59	6:54	7:26

SANDY HOOK

SHINNECOCK INLET	−0 50
Shinnecock Bay	+1 25
East Quogue	+2 45
Shinnecock Canal	+1 18
Indian Reservation	+3 05
MORICHES INLET	−0 56
Smith's Point	+3 28
Harts Cove	+1 30
Potunck Point	+3 35
Mastic Beach	+3 28
FIRE ISLAND INLET	−0 38
Inlet & Dem. Pt.	−0 38
Coast Giard Sta.	−0 19
Fire Island Light	+0 47
GREAT SOUTH BAY	
Sayville	+3 39
Heckscher State Pk.	+3 20
Bay Shore	+2 23
Babylon	+2 12
Amityville	+2 21
JONES INLET	−0 19
Loop Pkwy. Bridge	+0 25
Zachs Bay	+1 25
Seaford Harbor	+2 05
Freeport Creek	+0 34
E. ROCKAWAY INLET	−0 06
Long Beach Bridge	+0 19
ROCKAWAY INLET	−0 00
Beach Ch. (Bridge)	+0 38
JFK Airport	+0 26
STATEN ISLAND	+0 27
MANASQUAN	−0 12

WILLETS POINT

Little Neck Bay	−0 10
Execution Light	−0 06
Manhasset Bay	−0 01
Hempstead Harbor	−0 11
City Island	−0 03
Rye Beach	−0 28

NEW LONDON

Orient Point	+0 27
Connecticut River	+1 10
Little Gull Is. (Race)	+0 12
Greenport	+1 04
Southold	+1 43
New Suffolk	+2 26
South Jamesport	+2 32
Shinnecock Canal	+2 33
Noyack Bay	+2 05
Sag Harbor	+0 59
Gardiners Bay	+0 21
Promised Land	−0 14
Fort Pond Bay	−0 29
Montauk Inlet	−0 25
Montauk Point	−1 13

BRIDGEPORT

Lloyd Point	+0 08
Cold Spring Harbor	+0 08
Bayville Bridge	+0 13
Eatons Neck Point	+0 03
Northport Bay	+0 03
Norwalk Islands	+0 10
Smithtown Bay	−0 03
Cranes Neck Point	+0 05
Port Jefferson Harbor	+0 03
New Haven Harbor	+0 08
Mount Sinai Harbor	−0 08
Herod Point	−0 07
Mattituck Inlet	+0 19
Horton Point	−0 20
Truman Beach	−0 42

To compute the high tide for the area you wish to fish, simply find the closest area on the conversion tables. Add or subtract the hours and/or minutes as indicated from that areas station above. Example: "Shinnecock Inlet −0 50" is listed under "on Sandy Hook". − 0 50 means you subtract 50 minutes from the times given for the SANDY HOOK STATION for the day you are going fishing. For low tide, add 6½ hours to this figure.

The Original Knight

SOLUNAR TABLES

When To Fish Or Hunt

The schedule of solunar periods for the following week as printed below has been taken from the original Knight Solunar Tables. Plan your day so that you will be fishing good territory; hunting good cover during these times if you wish to find the best sport that each has to offer. The tables are not a guarantee that you will catch fish or see game during the period, however.

The major periods begin at the time shown and last for an hour and a half or two hours thereafter, and are in black face type. The minor periods are somewhat shorter in duration.

	A.M.		P.M.	
	Minor	Major	Minor	Major
3/4	6:45	12:55	7:05	1:15
3/5	7:30	1:45	7:55	2:05
3/6	8:20	2:30	8:40	2:55
3/7	9:10	3:20	9:30	3:45
3/8	10:00	4:15	10:25	4:40
3/9	10:55	5:05	11:15	5:30
3/10	11:45	5:55	:	6:20
3/11	12:05	6:45	12:35	7:10

PHASES OF THE MOON

3-30	3-9	3-16	3-22
NEW	1st Qtr.	FULL	Last Qtr.

SUNRISE/SUNSET

3/1	6:36	5:50
3/6	6:27	5:56
3/11	6:19	6:02
3/16	6:10	6:08
3/21	6:02	6:13
3/26	5:53	6:19
3/31	5:45	6:25

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